

# The Gazette

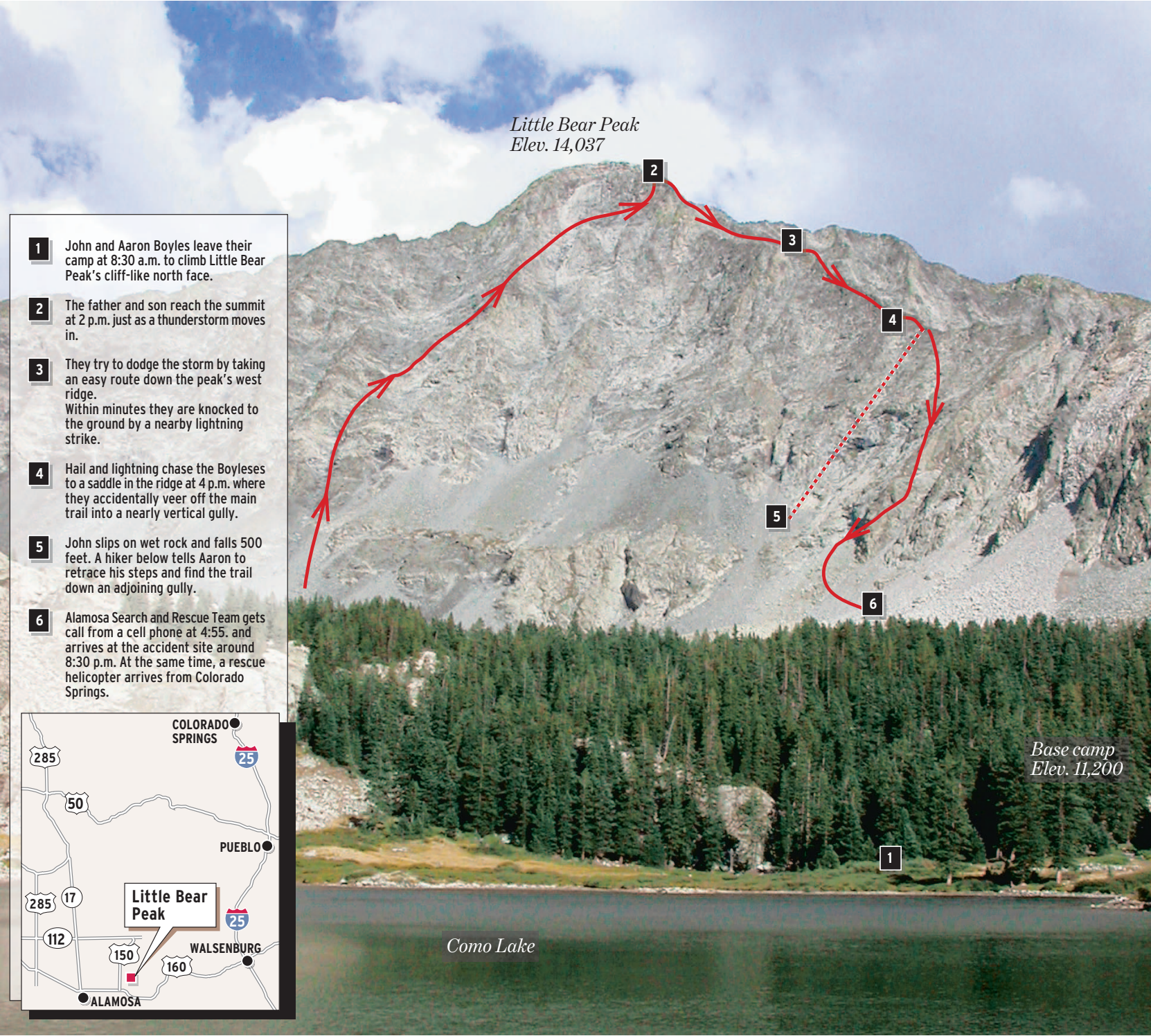
COLORADO SPRINGS • AUGUST 17, 2003

SUNDAY

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Fickle weather, menacing fourteener spell disaster for father, son on the wet, dangerous rocks of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains

## Last hours on Little Bear



By DAVE PHILIPPS  
THE GAZETTE

John Boyles sat on Little Bear Peak's bare rock summit. The trim, 6-foot-4-inch Colorado Springs man fished through the blue nylon backpack he had carried in the mountains for 30 years.

As he pulled out a bunch of grapes, his favorite hiking food, he watched his son, Aaron, set up their camera for a time-release shot.

It was 2 p.m. as the two squatted, smiling, waiting for the flash.

They had completed a thrilling ascent of the 14,037-foot peak via a crumbling ladder of granite on Little Bear's north face, and Aaron wanted to record it to show his mother and sister.

In the time it took for the camera to flash, their triumphant trip veered toward disaster.

"I felt little bugs crawling on my ears," recalled Aaron, 20, an experienced climber like his 52-year-old father.

As he swatted, he realized he wasn't feeling bugs but tiny arcs of static jumping off his head.

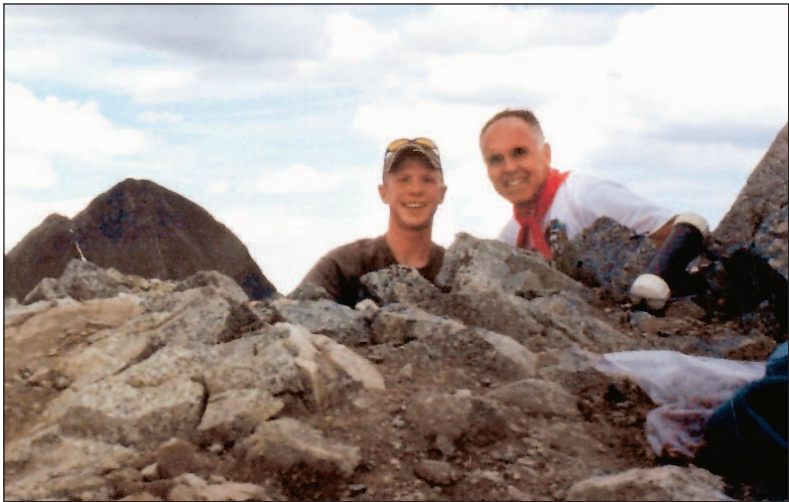


PHOTO COURTESY THE BOYLES FAMILY

"Things started getting really scary," Aaron said.

Clouds that had been white wisps in the morning had grown more menacing and donned cast-iron bottoms.

Aaron turned to tell his dad and noticed the tuft of hair around his dad's bald spot standing on end.

They knew what was next.

Lightning.

The peak was charged with a few million volts and seemed ready to explode. They had to get down.

Fast.

They packed up in a flurry and shot west along the ridge on the easiest trail to the valley.

As they scrambled over the exposed

**LAST SUMMIT TOGETHER:** Aaron Boyles, left, and John Boyles look out from the summit of Little Bear Peak. Aaron summed up the Aug. 2 climb by writing one word in the summit register: "INTENSE."

SEE **FATAL TREK** • PAGE 6

## 3 Ohio lines likely source of blackout

Rolling outages possible as grid gets back to work

LOS ANGELES TIMES

**WASHINGTON** • Investigators said Saturday they think the electrical blackout of much of the Northeast was most likely triggered by three transmission line failures in northern Ohio, and they cautioned rolling blackouts could occur as the giant grid system that powers New York, the upper Midwest and large swaths of Canada rights itself.

Officials said, however, it might be months before a thorough examination of the blackout is completed and recommendations can be made for preventing a repeat of the catastrophe that plunged 50 million people into the dark despite operators' frantic efforts to stem the damage.

A key focus of that investigation will be why the line failures Thursday near Cleveland led to such a sweeping and "cascading" blackout across large portions of two countries. It likely will bring renewed calls for an overhaul of an aging power system some say no longer can keep up in a modern, plugged-in world.

SEE **BLACKOUT** • PAGE 13

## Downhill isn't cruise to finish at marathon

By CARY LEIDER VOGRIN  
THE GAZETTE

Experienced runners of the Pikes Peak Marathon know better than to heed the old saying "It's all downhill from here."

Reaching the summit — the halfway point of the 26.21-mile race — would seem to put the most grueling part behind, but the return trip can stress the body the same, if not more.

Muscles can be more severely damaged running down than while running up. Slipping, sliding and tripping are common.

"People think it's easier running downhill, but it's not," said Dr. Peter Davis, director of coaching and sports sciences at the United States Olympic Committee.

Early this morning, about 800 runners will aim for the top of America's Mountain — a rise of 7,815 feet — only to turn around and come down.

The marathon course is known as one of the most challenging in the world.

Most people look at Pikes Peak and see a

**RECORD RUN:** Simon Gutierrez, 37, sets age-group record Saturday by winning the Pikes Peak Ascent in 2 hours, 13 minutes, 29 seconds.

**Race details in Sports**

SEE **MARATHON** • PAGE 8

## the WOUNDED Feelings of responsibility plague soldiers recovering at home after serious injuries

By JOHN DIEDRICH  
THE GAZETTE

An Army doctor broke the news to Capt. David Rozelle as he lay in a hospital tent south of Baghdad.

His right foot, mangled by a mine that exploded beneath his Humvee, might have to be amputated above the ankle.

The doctor said he could try to

save the foot, but it probably would just delay the inevitable.

"If we amputate, you get a new foot, you get back on your feet and get back to work. Your choice. I'll give you a few minutes," the doctor said and left.

Rozelle couldn't talk it over with his wife, who was home at Fort Carson. He had to make the call alone.

"All the weight was on me. 'Oh

Lord,'" Rozelle remembered thinking. He figured the foot was beyond saving. It had to go.

He summoned the doctor.

Rozelle is back at Fort Carson, one of dozens of local soldiers wounded in Iraq who face months of recovery.

The soldiers aren't happy to be home.

SEE **WOUNDED** • PAGE 4



ANDY ROGERS, THE GAZETTE

**NEW START:** A land mine explosion left Army Capt. David Rozelle without his right foot. At left, he prepares to walk on a prosthetic Thursday. His wife, Kim, and their newborn son, Forrest, are at left.

**Warm day, cool night**  
High 86 Low 56  
Sunny early. Showers and thunderstorms later.

A2

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Vol. 132  
No. 147



# WOUNDED:

## Comforts of home can't mask guilt, worrying about brothers in danger

FROM PAGE 1

Several want to return to Iraq to show they weren't beaten and to be with the men they consider brothers.

They aren't doing their job here.

"There is that guilt. I'm back here, and I do things I like to do, and they are in the desert suffering," said Staff Sgt. Lance Richard, injured by a grenade.

"I should be right there next to them."

### DANGEROUS MISSION

Rozelle commanded Killer Troop, a 140-soldier unit in the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment charged with controlling the city of Hit in western Iraq.

On June 21, Rozelle was on his way to an event kicking off the training of new Iraqi police officers when he noticed the dirt road ahead looked like it had been dug up. He told his driver to slow down.

They inched forward to investigate, tripping a mine powerful enough to cripple a tank.

The blast launched the hood 150 feet and shredded the engine, spraying Rozelle, his driver and interpreter with hot steel.

All three may have been killed if they were going faster, concentrating the blast closer to the passenger compartment. Rozelle's driver and interpreter had slight injuries.

At first, Rozelle focused on his left foot, which was trapped under the collapsed dashboard. He didn't notice the bloody bones poking from his right boot.

To get out, he planted that foot. It felt like a sponge under his weight.

It would be the last time he used it.

Doctors told him the explosion severed every tendon and shattered every bone. The heel was in at least 20 pieces.

"It was destroyed," he said.

Hearing the doctor's grim stories of the trouble he would face trying to save the foot, Rozelle, 31, knew he had one choice.

He wanted to get on with his life.

"I wanted to get back to work. I wanted to get back to this war," he said. "I wanted to walk with my son."

### WELCOMED HOME

Rozelle woke up after two hours of surgery to a room full of people, including a psychiatrist.

Everyone was concerned about his state of mind.

He was upbeat. He convinced himself he would be better off with his new foot, like it was a bionic upgrade.

The loss didn't hit Rozelle until mid-July, after he returned to Colorado Springs and his wife, Kim.

Doctors told Rozelle he would run, ski, mountain bike and climb mountains again on a foot made of ceramic, titanium and rubber, probably within a year.

Still, Rozelle always will be aware of his injury — when he takes a shower, goes swimming or hikes in a remote area.

"For 31 years, I had this foot and now I don't," he said. "I battled with that."

His wife and friends lifted his spirits by stoking his competitive nature. One said he finally might be able to keep up with Rozelle on the ski slopes — at least for a day.

A couple of weeks ago, Rozelle dreamed for the first time he had an artificial foot. He was in battle, charging with a bayonet.

"I was so proud of my foot," he said. "I was doing great things."

Kim Rozelle welcomed having her husband at home as she prepared to deliver their first child, Forrest, born Aug. 5.

It was tough, too. He was back but needed her care.

"She had to take care of me when I real-



PHOTOS BY ANDY ROGERS, THE GAZETTE

**IN THE ZONE:** In this April 30 photo, Lt. K.C. Hughes, left, and Staff Sgt. Lance Richard patrol in Ramadi, Iraq. Both are back in Colorado Springs after being wounded in Iraq. Both men say they feel a responsibility to get back to their fellow soldiers still in danger. "The hardest part is not being there to make sure those guys are all right," Richard said.

**"It feels wrong (here) because all your brothers are over there. Guys are still toughing it out over there, and you are getting to sleep in a bed and watch TV."**

**LT. K.C. HUGHES - recovering from a bullet wound to the back during a roadside attack outside Fallujah in Iraq**

ly felt like I needed to take care of her," said Rozelle, who had to wheel himself around the delivery room to hold his wife's hand.

Kim Rozelle trained herself not to suggest her husband couldn't do certain things such as taking walks or going to watch a bike race.

On crutches, Rozelle can make it only to the mailbox in front of the couple's two-bedroom house on Fort Carson. A walk around the block would exhaust him.

Rozelle sometimes pushes himself harder than his doctors would like. He tried to convince his wife to let him ride his bike and proposed jumping rope on one foot.

"This ain't going to slow me down," Rozelle said Thursday as he was fitted for the foot, stood and walked for the first time.

The injury didn't rob Rozelle of his humor. He jokes about being a "gimp" or how he plans to pack his extra foot like spare underwear when he goes on trips.

"I'll look good on the beach with that one," he told the specialist fitting his foot.

Rozelle met President Bush last week, one of a few wounded soldiers to do so at Denver International Airport.

The captain, his wife and Forrest toured Air Force One. Bush asked Rozelle several times to go running once he gets a prosthetic foot. Rozelle plans to do it.

As he prepares to walk again, Rozelle looks forward to pulling on his Army boots once more.

Kim Rozelle made him promise he wouldn't decide his future in the Army until he got home. Worried he wouldn't want to continue doing what she knew he loved, Kim Rozelle was ready to convince

him to stay.

He didn't need encouragement.

The regiment offered Rozelle another command he expects to take in May when the unit returns to Fort Carson.

If he could, Rozelle would love to return to the war and to Hit.

"I want to go back and walk through town," he said. "It was a victory for them. I wish they had fought like men. I think I would have outgunned them."

### BLOODY BATTLE

Lt. K.C. Hughes, Staff Sgt. Richard and 16 other soldiers were on a typical mission May 27: manning a checkpoint and looking for weapons and anyone suspicious.

Eagle Troop set up the checkpoint outside Fallujah, where numerous anti-American attacks have taken place since the regiment took the area in late April.

Traffic was slow that night, a car or truck coming every five minutes.

Hughes and the other soldiers had run dozens of checkpoints, becoming expert at looking for guns, ammunition, large amounts of cash and other contraband.

Shortly after midnight, a truck pulled up with five Iraqi men. Soldiers found a few guns in the truck and questioned the men.

A pickup then approached with three men in it. The truck stopped, but the men did not get out. A soldier approached as other troops covered him.

The men stepped from the truck and sprayed five soldiers with AK-47 assault rifles.

Richard heard the gunfire and emerged from behind a Bradley Fighting Vehicle. He shot and killed the driver of the pickup from about 75 feet. The Iraqi dropped a grenade as he crumpled. Richard was hit by shrapnel when it exploded.

Another soldier shot and killed another Iraqi. The third fled on foot.

The firefight lasted 10 or 15 seconds.

The two dead Iraqis had grenades strapped to their bodies and several AK-47s, grenades and ammunition stashed in the truck.

Commanders concluded they planned a larger attack, were surprised by the checkpoint and went down fighting.

"Everyone was soaked in blood," Hughes said of his men.

"No one curled up in a ball. They all took care of their brothers and buddies. They were real soldiers."

Richard bandaged his own wounds, what he thought were just scrapes. He later learned the grenade blasted asphalt pebbles into his knee, and he would need surgery.

Two Fort Carson soldiers, Sgt. Thomas Broomhead and Staff Sgt. Michael Quinn, died. Six soldiers were injured.

It was the bloodiest attack against Fort Carson soldiers serving in Iraq, but it wasn't over.

Hughes was standing on a Bradley trying to account for his soldiers when shots rang out again, this time from an open field or buildings nearby.

One 7.62 high-velocity bullet sliced into Hughes' shoulder and bounced around before ricocheting off his vertebrae and blasting out his back, leaving an exit wound the size of a half-dollar.

The shot felt like "a red-hot poker" and threw Hughes against the Bradley, briefly taking away his breath.

Minutes earlier, Hughes cared for a soldier shot through the back and hit in the lungs.

"The first thought was 'OK, this is it,'" said Hughes, 24 and two years out of West Point. "I'm dead."

### GUILT AT BEING HOME

Sandstorms grounded Black Hawk helicopters that day, so Hughes, Richard and the other injured soldiers were taken to a local Iraqi hospital.

From there, they went to Baghdad, Kuwait and finally U.S. military hospitals in Europe.

Everyone knew they were going home.

At first, they were happy to be leaving Iraq's stifling heat and exhausting, nonstop danger.

As they slept in beds with sheets for the first time in months, watched television and had cold beer, guilt hit them.

"You know your brothers have died, and your other brothers are still there," Hughes said.

Richard and Hughes are recovering. Both hope to return to Iraq.

Richard won't be ready until January at the earliest. Another knee surgery would sideline him for the whole deployment, expected to end in April or May.

Hughes could go back next month if he doesn't need shoulder surgery.

Friends and family have quizzed the men, both single, on why they want to return to the often miserable, dangerous country.

"Most people who say, 'You're crazy,' they have never been in that situation and bonded like that. We depended on each other," Richard, 25, said. "These guys are like family."

Richard feels a responsibility to take care of the soldiers in his section. He promised several wives he would bring their husbands home safely.

"The hardest part is not being there to make sure those guys are all right," he said.

Regiment commanders are holding a job for Hughes if he can go back. As an officer, he said he should be with his men.

"It feels wrong (here) because all your brothers are over there," he said.

"Guys are still toughing it out over there, and you are getting to sleep in a bed and watch TV."

Getting shot changed Hughes. He is more mature and philosophical about life and more cautious.

He doesn't drive as quickly on Colorado Springs' streets.

"You definitely feel your own mortality."

**FIRST STEPS:** Capt. Dave Rozelle walks for the first time with his new prosthetic foot Thursday at Audubon Orthotic & Prosthetic Services in Colorado Springs. Prosthetist Chris Jones observes. Rozelle is determined to not let the prosthetic hinder his active lifestyle. "This ain't going to slow me down," he said during his fitting.



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